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MAHATHIR-RELIGION

(EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AT 10.30 PM, JULY 9)

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 9<sup>46</sup> (BERNAMA) -- THE ASSIMILATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO GET NON-MUSLIMS TO ACCEPT THE ISLAMIC FAITH OR CHANGE THEIR CULTURE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TONIGHT.

+THE GOVERNMENT ONLY EMPHASISES THOSE ISLAMIC VALUES WHICH CAN MAKE US NOT ONLY GOOD PERSONS BUT ALSO ACCEPTABLE BY ALL OF SOCIETY,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IN THE +ISU SEMASA+ (CURRENT ISSUES) PROGRAMME OVER RTM.

THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY ANXIETY OVER THE MATTER BECAUSE ISLAMIC VALUES EMPHASISE DILIGENCE, TOLERANCE, RESPONSIBILITY AND OTHER GOOD QUALITIES THAT ALL PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE DID NOT SEE ANY REASON FOR ANXIETY UNLESS THE PEOPLE MADE A DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION OF THE MATTER, AND IT WAS BECAUSE THEY DID SO, THAT THEY MIGHT FEEL FRIGHTENED.

ASKED IF NON-MUSLIMS MIGHT HAVE BEEN FRIGHTENED BY THE DEMANDS OF EXTREMIST GROUPS IN ISLAM ITSELF, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT STATE WHICH OF THE ISLAMIC VALUES IT WANTED TO ASSIMILATE BECAUSE EVEN IN THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY THERE WERE THOSE WHO ARE IMPERFECT. -- MORE

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HE SAID IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO MADE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE MATTER BY SAYING THAT SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT ASSIMILATE ISLAMIC VALUES THEN IT SHOULD CHANGE THIS AND THAT AND THAT NON-MUSLIMS MUST ABIDE BY THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM AND SO ON.

HE ADDED: +THAT IS NOT OUR INTENTION. THESE PEOPLE ARE SOMETIMES SO EXTREME THAT EVEN MUSLIMS FEEL PRESSURED BY THEIR WAYS. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY OPPOSE THE ASN (AMANAH SAHAM NASIONAL). APPARENTLY THAT IS HARAM (FORBIDDEN).

+FOR THAT MATTER, THEY OPPOSE EVERYTHING SO MUCH SO THAT IF IT IS POSSIBLE THEY WILL WANT TO ISOLATE THEMSELVES COMPLETELY, WITH THE WOMEN NOT ALLOWED TO WORK AND HAVING TO REMAIN AT HOME, AND WEAR THE PURDAH.+

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THESE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE ADOPTED THE SAME STAND EVEN IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT ANNOUNCED THE ASSIMILATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES. BUT HE SAID NON-MUSLIMS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THIS WAS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

+OUR INTENTION IS TO HAVE A GOVERNMENT THAT IS RESPONSIBLE, TRUSTWORTHY, EFFICIENT, CLEAN, HARDWORKING AND ONE WHICH HAS A GOOD ATTITUDE TOWARDS ITS DUTIES AND TO THE PEOPLE,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA  
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